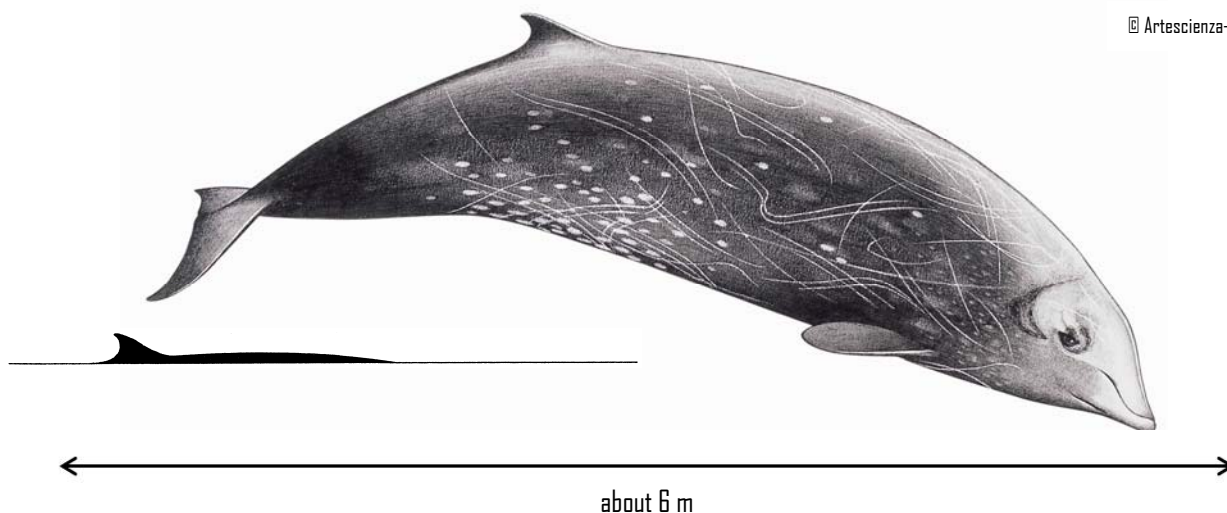


Class: <b>Mammalia</b> Order: <b>Cetacea</b> Sub-order: <b>Odontoceti</b> Family: <b>Ziphiidae</b> Genus: <b><i>Ziphius</i></b>	IUCN global conservation status: <b>Minor preoccupation</b> ACCOBAMS/IUCN global conservation status: <b>Insufficient data</b> (Mediterranean)	
	Mediterranean: <b>Regular</b>	Black Sea: <b>Absent</b>
<b>CUVIER'S BEAKED WHALE</b> <i>Ziphius cavirostris</i> (G. Cuvier, 1823)		

English: Cuvier's beaked whale

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<b>Name:</b>	♦ Scientific:	From Greek <i>xiphas</i> = sword, indicating a slender beak, and from Latin <i>cavus</i> = hollow and <i>rostrum</i> = beak, presumably to indicate a marked rostral concavity.
	♦ Common:	After the famous French naturalist and palaeontologist Georges Cuvier, who described the species in 1823.

#### DESCRIPTION *Discreet whale*

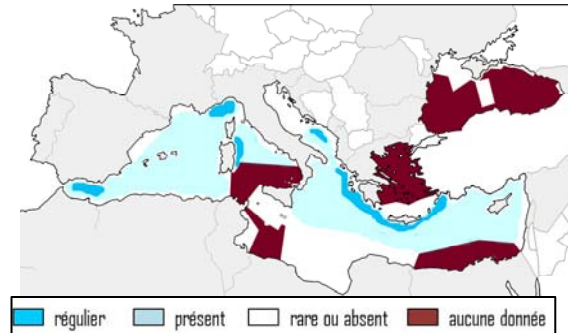
<b>Size:</b>	Male:	About 6 m (max. 6.7 m) - 2-3 tons
	Female:	Generally larger than the male (max. 7 m) - 2-3 tons
	Newborn:	2 -2.7 m - about 250 kg
<b>Head:</b>	Small relative to body. Receding forehead, nose slightly marked. Lower jaw exceeds the upper one.	
	2 large conical teeth, 7-8 cm long at the tip of the lower jaw in adult males; smaller in adult females, often embedded in the gums.	
	2 throat groves forming an open V.	
<b>Body:</b>	Long and robust, relatively cylindrical.	
	Colouration: relatively dark on the dorsal side from bluish grey to brown, lighter on the ventral side. In older specimens, the forehead and snout are white and the body is often strewn with whitish spots and linear scars caused by social interactions.	
	Colouration is variable depending on location, age and sex.	
	Lighter-coloured scars and spots on the ventral side and flanks.	
<b>Dorsal fin:</b>	Small (less than 40 cm), sickle-shaped to triangular, located in the posterior 2/3rd of the body.	
<b>Pectoral fins:</b>	Small and lanceolate.	
<b>Tail:</b>	Wide with a shallow or absent median notch.	
<b>Blow:</b>	Very inconspicuous, oriented slightly forward and to the left.	

## DISTRIBUTION

Cosmopolitan, the most widely distributed Ziphiid; absent only in polar waters. Like other Ziphiids, knowledge of its distribution is mostly derived from stranding records.

## MEDITERRANEAN AND BLACK SEAS

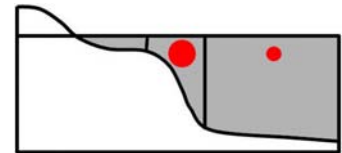
Cuvier's beaked whales live in the western and eastern basins of the Mediterranean and the adjacent Atlantic area. They are relatively abundant in the Alboran Sea, in other Spanish Mediterranean waters, in the Ligurian Sea, especially around the submarine canyons, in the central Tyrrhenian Sea, in the south of the Adriatic Sea and in the Hellenic Trench. Absent from the Black Sea and the Marmara Sea.



## HABITAT AND ECOLOGY

Primarily a deep-sea species often found at the deep slope of submarine canyons and steep habitats.

The Mediterranean population is genetically distinct from neighbouring populations of the North-East Atlantic.



## BEHAVIOUR

This species is very little known due to its shyness. It has been suggested that the best way to observe it is to look in the wake of the boat rather than the front. Apparently, strandings of this species are more frequent than any other Ziphiid. The average group size varies between 2 and 3, except in the western Ligurian Sea, where the average is 4.

<b>Longevity</b>	About 35 years or more.
<b>Swimming speed:</b>	2 to 3 kts (4 to 6 km/h), reaching bursts of 10 kts (18 km/h).
<b>Dives:</b>	300 m or more in dives lasting 20 to 40 min. When diving, it rounds out its back and briefly raises the fluke above the surface.

## REPRODUCTION

<b>Sexual maturity:</b>	Females: about 10 years (i.e., about 6 m long). Males: probably at 15 years
<b>Breeding season:</b>	-
<b>Gestation:</b>	-
<b>Nursing:</b>	-

## FOOD

Pelagic cephalopods (squid, etc.) and fish.

## THREATS

Anthropogenic noise, bycatch in driftnets, ingestion of solid debris and plastic waste causing intestinal obstruction. Military sonar and seismic surveys have repeatedly caused strandings and deaths of Cuvier's beaked whales. The use of military sonar has caused Cuvier's beaked whale strandings with tissue damage caused by the *in vivo* formation of gas bubbles, perhaps due to decompression sickness.